

Presentation of Forum for International Cooperation on
Fire Research: the Promise of Fire Safety Engineering

Dr. Jack E. Snell, Deputy Director
Building and Fire Research Laboratory, NIST, USA
FORUM Chairman

Abstract:

The Forum for International Cooperation on Fire Research, FORUM, is an informal group of heads of fire research organizations throughout the world. Its aim is to reduce the burden of fire through international cooperation. Towards this end, the FORUM has four general objectives: promote fire research, facilitate technology transfer, optimize the use of scarce resources for fire research, and advance fire safety engineering. Particularly relevant to this symposium is the last of these objectives, advance fire safety engineering. Doing this requires a scientifically-based knowledge of fire; recognized calculational tools and reliable data; and recognized professional status for the discipline of FSE with appropriate education and training of its practitioners. The organizations which we head provide the technical basis for much of this through our research, and we provide support and encouragement for the rest through participation in international technical and standardization organizations, and international conferences and symposia such as this one.

Following this symposium, the FORUM will meet for the ninth time. Each year, we meet at the location of one of our members. This year's host is SINTEF. This symposium is the fifth in a series of such meetings arranged by the FORUM in cooperation with leading fire safety organization(s) within the host member's country - this year, the Norwegian Fire Protection Association - for the purpose of broadening understanding of and support for fire safety engineering in the host nation. The intent is to focus on the status, and issues associated with the progress, of fire safety engineering in the host organization's country while bringing to the discussion expertise on related advances elsewhere around the world. Our expectation is that through this sort of sharing all participants will come away with a better understanding of needs and opportunities.

This presentation will briefly introduce the FORUM, and then highlight the potential fruits of fire safety engineering, and issues associated with its advance, based, in large measure, on the perspectives gained from the previous FORUM sponsored symposia and research of FORUM members. Simply put, fire safety engineering is changing the way fire safety is provided and it is reducing both the losses and costs of fire safety. These changes have significant implications for product manufacturers, fire protection industries, building designers, and risk managers, and to regulatory officials and the fire services, including their future roles.